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DOD MOVES FORWARD WITH SPECIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS REFORM

Progress is being made in Secretary of Defense William Perry's plan to reform the acquisition process in the Department of Defense. Since Secretary Perry announced his plan in February 1994, more than 1200 commercial standards have been adopted, a plan for a national software development standard has been created and a special military specification hot line telephone number is in place.

"Acquisition reform has long been one of my top goals here at the Pentagon," Perry said when he introduced his plan. "We need access to state-of-the-art commercial technology, we need the ability to obtain products and technologies more rapidly and efficiently, and we need to cut costs and save taxpayers' dollars. We need to replace, whenever and wherever we can, military-unique specifications," the Secretary explained.

Perry also said that the use of commercial and performance standards fits in with the Administration's concepts of dual-use technology and support of our nation's industrial base by relying on the commercial marketplace.

Following are highlights of successful steps toward acquisition reform in DoD:

- **1200 Commercial Standards Adopted** -- This is the most that the Department has ever adopted at one time. It also represents a growth of nearly 20 percent of the total for all specifications and standards adopted by DoD. These documents were developed by trade associations, industry groups, and professional societies. Adoption of these commercial standards for government use moves the Department one step closer to achieving the culture shift called for by Secretary Perry.

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- **A National Software Development Standard Planned --** The DoD Standards Improvement Council, established by Secretary Perry to be the primary coordinating body for specification and standards reform, has approved a strategy for replacing existing military standards governing software development with a commercial standard. The first step in this new strategy, as an interim measure, is the approval of military standard 498 that covers software development and documentation, and is the outgrowth of a DoD-industry collaboration. This action eliminates three military standards and 30 Data Item Descriptions. With proper tailoring, MIL-STD-498 is designed to be usable on very small to very large, complex software systems. This action places DoD in the forefront of software development practices for the next century. MIL-STD-498 will be canceled once a commercial standard is published.
- **MIL-SPEC Hot Line Activated --** The DoD has established a toll-free military specification hot line to answer questions on the Department's policies and efforts to achieve specifications and standards reform. The phone number is: 1-800-DAR-SPEC (1-800-327-7732). DAR stands for Defense Acquisition Reform, and SPEC means specifications. Callers will be connected to a 24-hour a day answering machine that will record comments, questions or concerns on specific specifications or standards, implementation issues, the military specification waiver process, or general policy direction. The machine will be monitored continuously during the workday, and calls will be returned promptly.

Within Secretary Perry's office, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Economic Security Joshua Gotbaum is charged with implementation of specifications and standards reform.

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